

Message Text

SECRET

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42

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W

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O 081240Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4285

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KIGALI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T BUJUMBURA 0287

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, BY, UR, BE

SUBJECT: SOVIET REFUGEES: SOVIET EMBASSY REACTS TO KHMELEVSKI
FAMILY'S DISAPPEARANCE

REF A. BRUSSELS 2827, B. BUJUMBURA 284

1. FOLLOWING INFORMATION FROM THOSE DIRECTLY INVOLVED:

A. BEGINNING MORNING OF MAY 7 AND CONTINUING UNTIL EARLY
EVENING, SOVIET PERSONNEL MADE INCREASINGLY FREQUENT AND URGENT
INQUIRIES TO FRIENDS OF KHMELEVSKI FAMILY AS TO LATTER'S
WHEREABOUTS. REPLIES PLED IGNORANCE.

B. MMR. KHMELEVSKAIA HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN REFUSED
PERMISSION ACCOMPANY HER HUSBAND BACK TO MOSCOW. (SHE WAS
THEN PLANNING FIGHT TO CLEAR HIM). BUT ABOUT NOON ONE SOVIET
GAVE KHMELEVSKI FRIEND TELEGRAM FOR HER. TELEGRAM PURPORTEDLY
FROM HER MOTHER, URGING HER RETURN MOSCOW.

C. AT ONE POINT A SOVIET INADVERTENTLY LET SLIP THAT
KHMELEVSKI'S TICKET HAD RECENTLY BEEN BROUGHT INTO COUNTRY

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(PRESUMABLY BY OTHERWISE UNKNOWN MAY 2 ARRIVALS MENTIONED

BUJUMBURA 277).

D. KHMELEVSKI CAR WAS LEFT OUTSIDE MID-TOWN GARAGE AND BY MID-AFTERNOON SOVIETS HAD IT UNDER CONSTANT AND OBVIOUS SURVEILLANCE. THEY ASKED GARAGE OWNER'S WIFE TO TELL KHMELEVSKI TO GET IN TOUCH WITH HIS EMBASSY WHEN HE RETURNED.

E. FINAL EFFORT (AS OF MIDNIGHT MAY 07) WAS CALL BY OTHER SOVIET UNESCO PROFESSOR AT ENS, GUENNADI TKATCH, AT 1845 LOCAL. TKATCH, WHO APPARENT SOURCE KHMELEVSKI DIFFICULTIES, SAID BE "PANIC-STRICKEN".

F. UNUSUAL ACTIVITY, INCREASING THROUGHOUT DAY, NOTED AT SOVIET EMBASSY. SECOND SOVIET PROFESSOR AT UNIVERSITY (PRESENCE PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN TO US) WAS ABSENT FROM LATE AFTERNOON STAFF MEETING BECAUSE OF MEETING AT EMBASSY.

2. COMMENT: SOVIETS CAUGHT COMPLETELY OFF-GUARD AND BY LATE AFTERNOON APPARENTLY STILL HOPING KHMELEVSKI FAMILY ONLY HIDING IN BUJUMBURA.

3. KHMELEVSKI FRIENDS NATURALLY ASSESSING POSSIBILITY SOVIET RETRIBUTION AGAINST THEMSELVES. MOST INCLINED DISCOUNT. IN LIGHT LIMITED SOVIET CAPABILITIES HERE AND LIKELY REPERCUSSIONS ELSEWHERE OF ANY SUCH ACTION, EMBASSY AGREES, BUT WOULD WELCOME COMMENT BY ADDRESSEES.

4. APPEARS IMPORTANT FACTOR IN KHMELEVSKIS' DECISION TO FLEE RATHER THAN ATTEMPT FIGHT ACCUSATIONS WAS FRIENDS' ACQUAINTANCE WITH OTHER RUSSIANS WHO HAD SOMEHOW INCURRED OFFICIAL DISPLEASURE AND PAID MORE OR LESS SEVERE PENALTY. KEITER

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